

Whitehouse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108577
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	301357
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrea Lyons HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Gordon
Headteacher	Ms Rachel Woods
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Whitehouse Lane North Shields Tyne and Wear NE29 8PE
Telephone number	0191 2006346
Fax number	0191 2006257

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Inspection number	301357

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Whitehouse School is a smaller than average primary school. It is situated in a community which experiences twice the level of social and economic deprivation found nationally. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is double the national average. It has a high number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ten of whom attend the additionally resourced provision for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties based within the school. The number of pupils of minority ethnic origin is below average and very few speak English as an additional language.

A new headteacher took up post at Easter 2007, seven weeks before the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Whitehouse is a satisfactory school, which is now improving. It has a number of strengths. Teachers are committed to pupils' welfare and have high quality teaching skills, such as good subject knowledge and lesson planning. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors, sporting activities and developmental experiences, such as the Foundation Stage garden. Staff work hard to enliven a shabby environment with bright displays. Parents recognise the hard work and commitment of staff and rightly value these aspects of the school highly. Pupils' attendance has been below average, but has recently improved, and they say that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school and for specific groups of pupils but satisfactory overall. Standards are well below average on entry. They remain below expectations throughout the school in English, particularly writing, and mathematics. However, standards improve for many pupils, particularly higher ability pupils and those with a statement of special educational need, at the upper end of Key Stage 2 so that overall results for the school in national tests are around expectations.

Despite these strengths, the school has a number of areas of significant weakness. These are now being addressed rapidly and effectively. The system to track pupils' progress has not been focused enough until recently to enable staff to identify pupils at risk of underachievement and provide timely support. Teaching has not been monitored so as to develop a consistent approach across the school. Assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent, and does not tell pupils clearly enough what they have to do next to improve. These difficulties have meant that pupils have not gained maximum benefit from otherwise good teaching.

The school has not developed an effective system for self-evaluation and improvement. The school buildings are extremely dilapidated, and some school resources are insufficient or out of date. The outdoor classroom lacks appropriate facilities to support pupils' independent learning.

Under the new headteacher's leadership, there has been a remarkable improvement in a very short period of time. She has an outstanding vision for the school and the drive and leadership skills to secure this. The senior management, the subject leaders and the governing body do not yet provide satisfactory support for the headteacher. Their roles are underdeveloped. However, all the tiers of management are now aware of their responsibilities and are highly committed to fulfilling them.

The local authority is providing a wide range of high quality support and extensive resources. Because of these, the high quality of the headteacher's leadership, the positive developments in the governing body, and the skill and commitment of staff, the school's capacity to improve is secure overall. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the capacity of the governing body, the senior management team and subject leaders, to support and challenge the headteacher in driving school improvement.
- Develop consistent approaches across the school to raise standards for all pupils in literacy and numeracy.
- Use the new tracking system effectively to identify pupils at risk of underachieving and take appropriate, prompt action to support them.

- Develop an assessment system which tells pupils what they need to do next to improve, and enables staff to match work securely to pupils' abilities.
- Improve the school buildings, including the Foundation Stage outdoor classroom.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils enter the nursery with skills well below what is typical for three-year-olds especially in language, communication, numeracy and understanding of the world. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. However because of their very low starting points many do not meet the national goals set for their learning, especially in literacy and numeracy, where standards remain very low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress

Standards in Year 2 are still below those expected nationally particularly in writing and few pupils attain the higher levels. Standards declined in the two years prior to 2006, but have now begun to pick up. Analysis of progress shows that there are inconsistencies across year groups and, in the past, significant underachievement in Year 3, and to a lesser extent in Years 4 and 5 as a result. Some pupils have not made as much progress as they should, as work has not always matched their abilities well enough. New tracking procedures have now been established to address this. Standards improve at the upper end of Key Stage 2, so that by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, many pupils, particularly those of higher ability, are working at about the right level for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are friendly and polite. They feel safe; they know they are cared for and that there are grown-ups they can seek out if they are upset or worried. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils generally behave well in lessons, but sometimes do not listen as carefully as they should. The elected school council meets regularly, but there are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to make their views and opinions known, and children are not fully involved with decision making. Children help to fundraise, but are not always clear as to how the money has been spent.

The school is working to promote healthy lifestyles. Drinking water is available, and there are healthy choices at lunchtime and a good range of opportunities in physical education. Children emphasise that bullying is rare, but are confident that it is dealt with successfully if it occurs. Opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) at the local secondary schools help develop skills and prepare pupils for the next stage in their education. Pupils acquire the skills of teamwork by taking part in a range of sporting opportunities and by working together in class in pairs or groups. The school places importance on raising self-esteem, for example rewarding good attendance and behaviour.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with a number of good features. Overall, many areas of teachers' skills and experience are of a high standard. For example, they have good or sometimes outstanding knowledge of their subjects, or specific approaches to meet the needs of particular pupils, such as those who are gifted and talented. They use this detailed knowledge to plan well structured lessons which have a wealth of information and build carefully on pupils' existing learning. In good lessons, these plans are then enlivened by a good balance of activities which enable pupils to experience a range of learning situations and work independently. Sometimes lesson plans are too ambitious for the pupils' abilities or the scope of the lesson, and lessons can be too teacher directed, with over-long introductions.

Staff know their pupils well and, in the best lessons, use assessment information to set work for groups of pupils which is well matched to their needs. The teachers have good relationships with their pupils and use a wide range of strategies to encourage participation and good behaviour. However, although pupils' progress is sometimes good, it is more often only satisfactory because teachers' skills are not sufficiently focused or consistent. For example, there is not yet a school wide approach to areas such as assessment during lessons. Teachers vary in their ability to assess pupils' learning through observation and questioning, and adapt the lesson accordingly. The system for tracking pupils' progress has only recently provided staff with a sharp enough focus on pupils' progress, so that teachers can provide specific additional support where pupils are falling behind.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The new headteacher has correctly identified the need to provide more opportunities in the creative arts and has already arranged projects that involve artists working in the school. Enrichment opportunities in sport are good. A range of adults offers expertise in a number of sports, and the school is rightly proud of its contribution locally in attending tournaments. Shortcomings in ICT provision are being addressed. In Nursery the curriculum is exciting and interactive, providing pupils with a very good start to their learning. In the Reception class there are not yet enough opportunities for children to initiate their own learning in a range of structured play opportunities. However, the Foundation Stage outdoor classroom is underdeveloped and does not provide enough opportunities for children to take part in large scale physical and creative play and make inventive choices. Some curriculum areas do not have sufficient up to date resources, for example, religious education, ICT, and some aspects of early year's education, such as Reception class resources.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good. Staff know pupils well and have an understanding of their emotional needs. Good use is made of outside agencies including the attendance officer to ensure pupils arrive at school on time and attend regularly. Attendance has been identified as below average in the past, but the school is now doing as much as it can and attendance figures have improved to around the national average. Child protection, risk

assessments and health and safety arrangements are in place. There is a new system for tracking pupils' progress but in the past this has not been rigorous enough to highlight pupils who are underachieving, and assessment does not provide enough guidance for pupils. The school makes good efforts to involve families by newsletters. Pupils are critical of the dilapidated buildings and wish for improvements

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher has achieved a remarkable amount in the last half term. She has radically improved the system for tracking pupils' progress, established the mechanisms for effective self-evaluation and review, drafted a well focused development plan, and introduced some much-needed developments such as the involvement of pupils in assessing how well they are learning. She has identified and actioned essential areas for improvement, for example in arranging urgently needed refurbishment of the school premises. She has established good relationships with the local authority, requesting and receiving a high level of specific support. Alongside the longer-term strategic issues, she is working with a range of partners from the school food coordinator to the education welfare service, to improve the day-to-day outcomes for pupils. This has had clear benefits for the school, which parents have already recognised. Although it is still too early for many of the whole-school academic developments to have had much impact on standards, early indications are good. Her vision for the school and drive to achieve this are outstanding.

The senior management, the subject leaders and the governing body do not yet provide satisfactory support for the headteacher. Their roles are underdeveloped. However, the senior management team is conscientious and committed to improving the school. It has a wide range of skills and has contributed towards recent improvements. Subject leaders also have considerable skills, but they have little experience in monitoring and developing their subjects independently. The governing body is now developing its role effectively after a period of insufficient involvement in monitoring and holding the school to account. All the tiers of management are now aware of their responsibilities and are highly committed to fulfilling them.

The local authority is providing a wide range of high quality support and extensive resources. Because of these, the high quality of the headteacher's leadership, the positive developments in the governing body, and the skill and commitment of staff, the school's capacity to improve is secure overall. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitehouse Primary School, North Shields, NE29 8PE.

Thank you very much indeed for welcoming us to your school. Both Mrs Richardson and I enjoyed talking with you, and you told us very clearly and politely what you felt about the school. This helped us with our inspection.

We think that your school has a number of strengths. Teachers care about you and have many good teaching skills. You have a lot of extra activities in school, particularly for sport, but increasingly for other things like art, too. You have a very good new headteacher. Children generally make satisfactory progress while at school.

We have asked Ms Woods and all the staff to do some things to make the school even better. They had already started out doing some of them, as they are well aware of what needs to be improved. For example, the buildings obviously need a lot of work, and this is going to be started in the summer holidays. There are a few other things, to do with how the staff plan and arrange things across the whole school, such as tracking your progress so that anyone who needs help can get it as quickly as possible. One area where you could help is that we have asked teachers to make it more clear to you in their marking what you have to do next to improve. If they do that, you will need then to take note of what they advise and act on it.

We feel that your school has improved a good deal in the last few weeks, and will carry on improving. We both wish you well as you help the school to grow and develop, and send our best wishes for your own futures. Please thank your parents for sending in so many questionnaires. They sent more in than we generally receive, and they were all pleased with the school. Many were particularly pleased with the way that it is improving now.

Thank you again for all your help.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Lyons Wendy Richardson

Her Majesty's Inspector Additional Inspector